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*The* CHURCH of ROME's DOCTRINE  
*and* PRACTISE *with relation to the*  
WORSHIP of GOD in an UNKNOWN  
TONGUE *examin'd,*

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IN A  
SERMON  
PREACHED AT  
SALTERS-HALL,  
MARCH 6, 1734-5.

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By JOSHUA BAYES.

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I COR. XIV. 9.

*So likewise ye, except ye utter with the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.*

**W**HOEVER reads this chapter with care, and without prejudice, cannot, I apprehend, but easily observe, that a principal design of the apostle therein is to shew, that the worship of God in the assemblies of Christians, ought to be performed in a language which all that join in it are acquainted with; for he all along represents the use of an unknown tongue there, as contrary to the very end and design of such assemblies, and by several arguments shews, not only the impropriety, but the absurdity of it. And particularly in the words  
I have

I have now read, he plainly asserts, that what is spoken by those who officiate therein, shou'd be known by such as are present; and therefore, that they ought to *utter with the tongue words easy to be understood*, and that otherwise they would *speake into the air*, and what they said would be utterly lost and unprofitable to those that heard them.

But since the days of the apostle some have risen up in the world, and those such as make the greatest pretensions to religion, even to that degree as to confine it to themselves, and to exclude all from the hope of salvation that are not of their church and communion, who are of a different opinion from his; I mean those of the church of *Rome*, who would have us believe, that it is better to have the worship of God performed in an unknown tongue, than in a language which the people are acquainted with.

It may seem strange, that any who profess a regard to God, and to the welfare of souls, should give into an opinion and practice so directly contrary to scripture and reason too. But when we consider in how many other instances they have depraved the worship of God, as well as the doctrines of Christianity, we need not so much wonder at this, or think it strange that they who have locked up the *scriptures*



*tures* from the laity, and deny them the liberty of reading them in a language they understand, should, still the more to confirm them in their ignorance, appoint their *worship* to be in an unknown tongue too.

Whether they are in the right in insisting on this, or Protestants in being unwilling to submit to it, and in desiring to have their worship performed in a language which they are acquainted with, is what I am now to inquire into; and in order to determine this, I shall proceed in the following method.

I. I shall set before you what is the doctrine of the church of *Rome* concerning this matter,

II. I will endeavour to give you some account of what *St. Paul* has said concerning it in this chapter.

III. I shall consider what those of the church of *Rome* are wont to alledge in defence of their doctrine and practise. And,

IV. I shall then suggest some further reasons why we think it not only inexpedient, but unlawful, to use an unknown tongue in the worship of God.

I. I am to set before you, what is the doctrine of the church of *Rome* concerning this matter. And in order to this, I think it will be sufficient to refer you to what the *council of Trent* has decreed concerning it, for that is the present standard of their doctrine. Now therein it is declared,  
 “ That tho’ the mass contain great instru-  
 “ ction for God’s faithful people, yet it  
 “ seemed not expedient to the fathers, (*i. e.*  
 “ of that council) that it should be ce-  
 “ lebrated every where in the vulgar tongue;  
 “ wherefore retaining in all churches the  
 “ ancient rite, (or in all places the ancient  
 “ rite of every church) approved by the  
 “ holy *Roman* church, the mother and  
 “ mistress of all churches, lest Christ’s  
 “ sheep should hunger, and the children  
 “ asking bread, none should be found to  
 “ break it to them, the holy synod com-  
 “ mands pastors and all that have care of  
 “ souls, that during the celebration of the  
 “ mass, they should frequently by them-  
 “ selves, or others, expound some part of  
 “ those things which are read in it; and  
 “ among other things, let them expound the  
 “ mystery of the most holy sacrifice, (or  
 “ some mystery of this holy sacrifice) espe-  
 “ cially on sundays and feasts.

And in the next canon they add, “ If  
 “ any one shall say, that mass ought to be  
 “ cele-

“ celebrated only in the vulgar tongue, let  
 “ him be anathema.” \*

Thus has the council of *Trent* decreed :  
 but that we may have a clearer view of  
 the state of this controversy between the  
 church of *Rome* and us, it may be proper  
 here to remark a few things, as particu-  
 larly.

1. That they seem to confine it to *pub-  
 lick* worship, for they speak of the celebra-  
 tion of the mass ; and some of their divines  
 have said concerning *private* worship,  
 “ That it is lawful for every one to offer  
 “ his lesser prayers to God, in what tongue  
 “ soever he pleases ; and that all Catho-  
 “ licks are taught to say their private pray-  
 “ ers in their mother tongue.” Tho’ I  
 see no reason why the one should be in an  
 unknown tongue any more than the other,  
 since we ought to act from the like princi-  
 ples, and for the same ends, and with a  
 like frame and temper of mind in the one  
 as the other. And I am apt to believe,  
 that if this liberty be allowed, it is too sel-  
 dom practised, and that it is no uncom-  
 mon thing for those of their communion  
 to say even their *private* prayers in *Latin*,  
 tho’ they understand nothing of that lan-  
 guage.

\* Sess. 22. c. 8, 9.

2. That by the *vulgar tongue* is meant the language that is commonly spoke in any country, and which therefore the inhabitants of it are universally acquainted with; as suppose *English* in *England*, *Dutch* in *Holland*, *French* in *France*, &c. In this sense it is that we affirm the worship of God ought to be in the *vulgar tongue*, i. e. in every country in the language that is commonly used there, and so universally understood by the inhabitants of it. But this our adversaries deny, by appointing their mass to be in *Latin*, which is now a dead language, and is no where commonly spoken or generally understood in any part of the world.

3. I would further observe, that the council don't say it is absolutely *unlawful* that divine worship should be performed in the vulgar tongue, but only that it did not appear to them *expedient* it should be so; whereby they seem to have reserved to themselves a liberty of dispensing with this upon proper occasions; and perhaps they may have done so in some instances, and particularly in Protestant countries, the better to gain proselytes among them. But tho' they seem to speak with so much tenderness, yet at the same time they injoin the retaining what they call the "antient rite, approved by the holy *Roman* church, the  
" mother



[ II ]

“ mother and mistress of all churches,” *i.e.* the *Latin* service; and instead of allowing the mass in the vulgar tongue, only appoint pastors or others, now and then to explain some parts of it to them; which shews that if at any time they have dispensed with it, and indulged the celebration of it in the vulgar tongue, it has been more from constraint than choice; and that it is their opinion and desire that it should always and every where be celebrated in *Latin*. Yea, so very intent were they upon establishing this, that tho’ it was “ earnestly desired, and strenuously urged “ by the Emperor, the King of *France*, “ the King of *Poland*, the Duke of *Bavaria*, &c. that the publick service might “ be in a language understood by those “ that heard it, they could not prevail, “ but an *Anathema* is denounced against “ those that say the mass ought to be “ celebrated in the vulgar tongue.” \* And since that time, when some in *France* had published a translation of the Missal into *French*, Pope *Alexander* the 7th heavily complains of it, and in a Brief sent to the clergy of *France* on that occasion, “ stiles “ the authors of it, sons of perdition, and “ represents it as a novelty which he abhorred and detested as the seed-plot of

\* Dr. *Stratford's* Necessity of Reformation, Part 2. ch. 3. p. 66.

“ disobedience, rashness, sedition, and  
 “ schism, and of many other evils ; and  
 “ therefore that *French* Missal, or what  
 “ shall hereafter be published in any other  
 “ manner, he condemns, reprobates and  
 “ forbids.”† So that whatever compliance  
 the state of their affairs may now and then  
 put them upon, we see they are against  
 translations ; and I am afraid that if any of  
 the common people should desire a Bible  
 or a Prayer-Book in the vulgar tongue, in  
*Spain* or *Italy* or *Portugal*, it would be  
 enough to bring him under the suspicion  
 of heresy. I shall only add under this  
 head, That whereas the council says,  
 “ That lest Christ’s sheep should hunger,  
 “ and the children asking bread, none  
 “ should be found to break it to them,  
 “ therefore they command pastors and all  
 “ that have care of souls, that during the  
 “ celebration of the mass they expound  
 “ some part of those things that are read  
 “ in it ;” they herein plainly allow that  
 it is fit the people should understand some-  
 thing of what they are about, for other-  
 wise why is any part of it ordered to be  
 expounded to them ? And yet in the pro-  
 vision that is made for this more zeal is  
 shewn for their *Latin* service, than kind-  
 ness and concern for them, who surely

† Bulla Alex. VII, 1661.

would be much more edified by having the instructions and prayers contained in it, in a language they understand, than they usually are by the expositions which their Priests give of them.

Thus we see what is the *doctrine* of the church of *Rome*, that they are against the use of the *vulgar* tongue in *publick* worship; and their *practice* is agreeable to it, for it is their custom in all places to celebrate their divine offices in the *Latin* tongue.

II. Let us now see what *St. Paul* has said in this chapter, concerning the language which is to be used in Christian assemblies; and when we consider this, I doubt not we shall easily discern, that he is so far from giving any countenance to our worshipping God there in an *unknown* tongue, that he very plainly and expressly condemns it. That which gave occasion to what he has delivered in this chapter, was the unbecoming behaviour of some in the church of *Corinth*, who being inspired with the gift of tongues, were too apt to overvalue themselves upon it, so that it became too usual a practise among them to preach and pray and sing psalms in languages unknown to their auditory, without ever interpreting what they said, into the vulgar tongue. This the apostle  
condemns

condemns as an unwarrantable practise, and the arguments he makes use of to this purpose are such as fully shew, that the worship of God in Christian assemblies, ought to be in a language, in which all that are present may join, and be profited by it. Particularly he shews,

In the first place, That the worship of God in an unknown tongue is contrary to one great *end* and *design* of worship, which is, the *edification* and advantage of those that attend upon it. He lays it down as a general rule, *ver. 26.* That in publick assemblies all things should *be done to edifying*, and thro' the greatest part of the chapter he represents the instruction and advantage of the people, as what should be the principal aim of those who officiate in them. He exhorts indeed the *Corinthians* to *desire spiritual gifts*, but rather that they might *prophecy*, or be able to interpret the Scripture, *ver. 1.* And the reason of this he assigns, *ver. 2, 3, 4, 5.* For, says he, *he that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men but unto God, for no man understandeth him. But he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself, but he that prophesieth edifieth the church. I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied, for greater*



*greater is he that prophesieth, than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying.* Where he all along goes upon this reasonable supposition, that what is not understood, can never edify, and consequently that speaking in an unknown tongue must be altogether unprofitable, because it is not understood by those that hear it. And hence it is that he afterwards says, *ver. 18, 19. I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all, yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.* From all which it plainly appears, that in the opinion of the apostle, preaching or praying in an unknown tongue, is by no means allowable in Christian assemblies, because thereby one great end of them is defeated, which is the *edification* of the people.

Again, he represents it as *absurd* in itself, for men to speak to others in a language which they are unacquainted with, and which can be of no more use to 'em, than if they were wholly silent. This he illustrates by the similitude of a pipe or harp to those that dance, when they give no distinction in the sounds, and to a trumpet to those who are to prepare for the battle, when it gives an uncertain sound; in which case neither the one nor the other knows how  
to

to act. And, says he, v. 7, 8, 9. *Even things without life, giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise you, except ye utter with the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?* And he goes on, v. 10, 11. *There are, it may be, so many voices in the world, and none of them are without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a Barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a Barbarian unto me.* Now the plain design of all this is to shew, that as the end of speaking is to be understood, so where this end is not attained, it is all in vain, and to no purpose; and the prayers and praises that are uttered in a language which the people understand not, can be no better than speaking into the air, and abusing them with empty sounds, and must render both him that speaks, and them that hear, *Barbarians* to one another. And as this would be accounted absurd even in common conversation, much more must it be so in the worship of God.

Another argument which the apostle makes use of is, That all who attend in publick assemblies, ought to join in the worship

worship which is performed there ; but that this is render'd impracticable to those who are strangers to the language in which it is performed. This he urges, v. 15, 16. Having before directed those who were zealous of spiritual gifts, to seek that they might excel to the *edifying* of the church ; and when they spake with an unknown tongue, to pray that they might *interpret*, because without this, *tho' the spirit prayed, the understanding would be unfruitful*, and what was spoken could not be understood by those that heard it ; he adds, v. 15. *What is it then ? I will pray with the spirit, and will pray with the understanding also ; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.* Where, tho' he does not forbid their praying or singing under a divine *afflatus*, yet he would have them to perform both, so that others might understand and join with them therein. And v. 16. he gives the reason of this: *Else, says he, when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks ; seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest ?* Where he very plainly shews, that all who are present in Christian assemblies should be able to join in the worship performed there ; but that they are rendred incapable of this when he who officiates therein, speaks in a language which

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they

they are ignorant of. And sure both these must be readily acknowledged by all that allow themselves to consider. If Christians have no concern in the worship which is performed in publick assemblies; if, when the minister is employed in prayer, or in confession of sin, or in rendering praises and thanksgivings to God, the people are not at all obliged to join with him therein; to what purpose is it that they attend there? they may as well be absent from, as present in such assemblies. But if they ought to be there, and to bear a part in the worship performed in them, (which the apostle here plainly intimates, and our adversaries themselves do allow) how is it possible they should discharge their duty, when the whole of the service is in a language they understand not; or, as the apostle expresseth it, *How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? i. e.* How shall the body of the people (who are intended by such as occupy the room of the unlearned) declare their consent to, and concurrence in the prayers and praises that are offered to God, when they understand not what is said? And if for this reason the use of an unknown tongue was condemned in the church of *Corinth*, because the unlearned could not join in the prayers and praises that were pronounced



pronounced in it, then for the same reason must it be condemned in the church of *Rome*, since the common people know as little of their *Latin* service, as they did of inspired and uninterpreted prayers.

Again, the apostle shews, That their speaking in unknown tongues in Christian assemblies, was *to pervert the end for which the gift of tongues was afforded*. As this was a miraculous gift, so a principal end and design of it was (in common with other miracles) to confirm the truth of the gospel, and to persuade men to embrace the doctrine of it. But tho' it was necessary to spread Christianity in the world, yet there was no occasion for the use of it among those who were already converted to the Christian faith. This is insisted on, *v. 21, 22. In the law*, (or the Old Testament) says he, *it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people, and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord*; which by some is interpreted as referring to the obstinacy of many who persisted in their unbelief, tho' such as preached the gospel to them, had the gift of speaking in languages they had never learn'd, from whence they might be assured they had them by divine inspiration, and therefore that the doctrine they delivered was of God. And hereupon he adds, *Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not*

*to them that believe, but to them that believe not; but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.*

Wherein he shews, that they were of no use in Christian assemblies, and among those who had embraced the Christian faith, and wanted only to be further instructed and established therein; but that it was *prophesying*, or speaking in their own language, that was more proper for *them*. And if, upon this account, the apostle forbids the use of such inspired languages in their stated assemblies, his reasoning will be equally strong against the use of the *Latin* tongue in divine worship now; for as *that* can have no pretence to be a sign to them that believe not, since it is not received by inspiration, but acquired in the use of means; so neither is it suited to the edification of them that believe, since it is not generally understood by them. Yea further,

The apostle represents their using an unknown tongue in their religious assemblies, as what had a tendency to *expose* them and their worship to the contempt and ridicule of unbelievers, who might happen to come in among them, and so confirm them in their infidelity. Whereas, on the other hand, when those who minister, instead of speaking in an unknown tongue, plainly interpret scripture, and speak of the great

great truths of Christianity in a language intelligible and proper, a heathen or unlearned person coming in would probably be convinced, and become a convert to it. This argument the apostle urges, v. 23. *If therefore, says he, the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say you are mad?* Whereby he intimates that they would have just reason to think so; for to what purpose do men speak in such assemblies, if it is not with a design to be understood; or with what advantage can others attend upon them, if they understand not what is spoken? When men are met together for the worship of God, and a stranger comes in among them to observe what they are doing, who hearing only an empty sound of unintelligible words which he can make nothing of; and upon inquiry of those who by their postures and gestures seem to be very devout in it, should find, that neither do they understand any thing of what is said; would he not hereupon be tempted to look upon them rather as a company of men out of their wits, than as a worshipping assembly? And if, at that time, the speaking with tongues in Christian assemblies, which were not understood by the people, was in the apostle's opinion a reproach upon religion, and  
tended

tended to prejudice men against it; may not this with equal reason be said of the *Romish Latin Service*, which is no more understood by the generality of those that join in it, than those were then? But, as he goes on, *ver. 24, 25. If all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or is unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.* When they that minister in holy things speak in a language understood by all, and in a manner becoming the solemnity and importance of what they are about; this is a proper means of keeping up the credit of religion, and of persuading men to embrace it.

I shall only add in the last place, That to give the greater force to all that he had said, the apostle assures us in the close of his discourse on this subject, *That the things which he had written, to the Corinthians, were the commandments of the Lord;* and that no true prophet, or any one really inspired, durst deny it. He sharply rebukes those Christians for the disorder and confusion they had brought into Christian assemblies, *ver. 36.* and then adds, *ver. 37. If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things*



*things that I write unto you, are the commandments of the Lord.* And sure this is a consideration that should silence all objections, and be of greater weight and authority with us than the council of Trent's decree. But,

III. I proceed to consider what those of the church of *Rome* are wont to alledge in defence of their *doctrine* and *practise*. And here I shall first take notice of what they urge to evade the force of the apostle's reasoning in this chapter, and from whence they would shew that it does not conclude against them. And then I shall consider some further pleas they make use of to support their unreasonable practise of celebrating the worship of God, in a language which is not understood by the common people.

There are several things which they urge to evade the force of the apostle's reasoning in this chapter, the chief of which are drawn from an imagined *difference* in the case which he refers to, from what it is now. Of this they endeavour to produce several instances, from whence they would infer, that what he says, does not affect them.

They pretend, " That the apostle does  
 " not speak of their stated assemblies for  
 " publick worship, but of some more pri-  
 " vate

“ vate conferences, or spiritual exercises,  
 “ in which they were wont to edify one  
 “ another when the publick worship was  
 “ over.”

But in answer to this: Tho’ it should be allowed that such exercises were in use among them, and that the apostle might have some regard to them; yet that he speaks *only* of these, is so far from being true, that I think the contrary must be evident to any one that reads his discourse without prejudice; for it is plain from *ver.* 23, and 28. that he speaks of such exercises as were performed in the publick assembly, and *when the whole church was come together into one place.* Besides, if in such lesser assemblies they were to use a language which was understood by all present, and not to speak in an unknown tongue, unless there were some to interpret, then certainly they must be equally obliged to do this, when they were met together in more publick and solemn assemblies; and the reason which the apostle assigns for it, that *all things should be done to edifying*, must be as strong, yea stronger in this case than in the other.

They further pretend, “ That the apostle in this chapter only forbids the use of  
 “ such languages in the worship of God,  
 “ as were *miraculous* and inspired, and understood by none present, any more than  
 “ *Persic*

“ *Perfic*, or *Arabic* would be by us now ;  
 “ but that he does not speak of those that  
 “ are acquired by study, and are com-  
 “ monly understood by some in all places.”

This is an argument much insisted on by many of their writers ; but as it is precariously said, and without any proof, so the weakness of it will easily appear, if we consider,

That tho’ its true he speaks of such languages as were *miraculous*, and which they had the gift of by inspiration, yet he does not condemn the use of them, because they were *miraculous*, but because they were *unknown*, and not understood by those that attended there ; by which means he that spoke, did but speak into the *air*, and was a *Barbarian* to them ; what he said was altogether unprofitable ; and they could not say *amen* to his prayer or blessing. And if this was the reason why he forbids the use of them, as it appears to be from the whole scope of his discourse, then his prohibition must be understood as extending to any other language, which tho’ it be acquired, yet is unknown to the generality of those who make up Christian assemblies. Besides,

Tho’ the *Latin* tongue be more known now, than those languages might be which were then spoken by inspiration, yet it is no where a *living* language, or generally

understood by the inhabitants of any country, no not at *Rome* itself; and therefore to the greatest part of mankind it must be an unknown tongue, and as such the use of it in the publick worship of God, is condemned by the apostle in this chapter.

“ They would indeed persuade us, that the  
 “ apostle speaks only of barbarous tongues  
 “ and such as were wholly unknown to  
 “ them that heard them, but not of those  
 “ which were understood by learned and  
 “ civil people in every great city, as *Latin*  
 “ is.” But thus to explain the apostle, is in reality to contradict him; for it is evident from the whole tenor of his discourse, that he would have divine worship performed in a language which is understood by the *unlearned* as well as the *learned*, and by the meanest as well as the more polite in every place; and particularly from *ver. 16.* where he says, *Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen to thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest.* I know that by him that occupieth the room of the unlearned, they would understand one that supplied the place, and was to answer in the *stead* of those that were unlearned. But besides that there was no such custom at that time. and that every one was to say *amen* for himself, this sense of the expression is so contrary

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trary to the plain meaning of the original words, that *Bellarmino* himself rejects it, and says, " That they don't signify one " that acts for, or instead of the idiot " and unlearned, but one that sits in the " place of such, and is himself unlearned." And as the sense which they would put upon the apostle's design in this chapter, is very *unjust*, so methinks it is very *uncharitable* too, since it excludes the far greatest part of those who usually make up Christian assemblies from joining in the worship performed in them. If it be of no use to understand what is said in the duties of divine worship, why are they not performed in a language unknown to the learned as well as the unlearned, why not in *Persic* or *Arabic* as well as *Latin*? But if it be of use, as unquestionably it is, what right have the learned to it above the unlearned, and why may not these insist upon it as their privilege, as well as the other? If the unlearned are obliged to worship God as well as the learned, then sure it would be much more charitable to have their prayers in the vulgar tongue which both are acquainted with, than in *Latin*, which is understood only by a few.

Another pretence whereby they would evade the force of the apostle's reasoning in this chapter, is drawn from the different case of Christians now, from what it was

at that time, from whence they would infer, That tho' *then* it might be proper to have their publick services in a known tongue, yet there is not the like occasion for it *now*. They would have it that the rules which the apostle here lays down, were only temporary and such as suited the condition of the church at that time, but that the state of the church being since altered, they are now no longer to be observed. And if we inquire wherein the difference lies between those days and the present, they tell us, that Christians then were weak in the faith, and very ignorant of the principles of Christianity, and therefore they stood in need of being instructed and edified, and to that end it was proper that the offices of religion should be performed in a language which they understood ; but that now they are so well instructed in religion, and established in the faith, that they have no need of further instruction and edification. This is alledged by several of their writers, and particularly by *Harding* the Jesuit in his controversy with Bishop *Jewel*. \* Sure it is a sign they are put to very hard shifts, when they can use such an argument as this to support their cause. When we compare the primitive Christians with those of after-

\* Art. 3. Sect. 30.

ages, or at the present day, I am apt to believe we shall all be ready to conclude, that the preference, both in point of knowledge and faith ought to be given to the former; and I think we have very good reason for it, since we find the apostle in all his epistles giving so great commendations of them, and particularly giving thanks to God on the behalf of the Christians of *Corinth*, for the grace of God which was given them by Jesus Christ, that in every thing they were enriched by him in all utterance and in all knowledge, so that they came behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.\* Now this being the character of those Christians, I think we may appeal to the divines of the *Romish* church themselves, whether they can pretend that those of their communion do excel or even equal the Christians in the apostle's days. Perhaps in some sort they may seem to do so in point of *faith*; for being taught to believe as the church believes, and to receive all her doctrines and decisions implicitly, without ever inquiring into the grounds and reasons of them, when they are once brought to this, they may stand in little need of any further improvement. But if they were to be inquired into as to their *knowledge* in the doctrines

of Christianity, I fear it would soon appear that they have made no such progress therein, as to be above the need of further instruction. And if the fact upon which they found the difference between the primitive Christians, and those in their communion, be not true, then the inference they would draw from it must be wrong. And indeed, I doubt not it will hold much stronger the other way, and that we may with much better reason conclude, That since the apostle thought a known tongue in the worship of God was necessary for the Christians of that age, it must be much more so in our day.

Besides this plea which they make use of supposes or allows, that where Christians are weak in faith, and but of little knowledge in religion, (which they would have to be the case of Christians in the apostle's days) it is fit they should have the offices of religion in a language they understand; which is in effect to give up the cause, since in all places there are some such to be found; and yet even this is contrary to their ordinary practise, and what they don't allow in any country, no not among the *Indians* themselves.

Again, they urge as a further instance of the difference between those prayers and praises which the apostle speaks of in this chapter, and those which are contained in their liturgy, " That the principal end of  
" the



“ the former was the instruction and edi-  
 “ fication of the people, which end could  
 “ not be attained, unless they were spoken  
 “ in a known tongue, or afterwards in-  
 “ terpreted ; but that the chief end of di-  
 “ vine offices is not the instruction and  
 “ consolation of the people, but the wor-  
 “ ship of God.” Thus *Bellarmino* says, \*  
 and the *Rhemists* to the same purpose,  
 “ That prayers are not made to teach,  
 “ make learned, or increase knowledge,  
 “ tho’ by occasion they sometimes instruct ;  
 “ but their special use is, to offer up our  
 “ hearts, desires, and wants to God.” †

But the answer to this is easy and ob-  
 vious, that what they assert is not true in  
 itself, and therefore what they would in-  
 fer from it, must fall to the ground. They  
 affirm that the *principal* end of those re-  
 ligious exercises which the apostle speaks of,  
 was the instruction and consolation of the  
 people. But this is said without any proof,  
 and contrary to the nature and design of  
 all religious assemblies, the principal end  
 of which is to worship God, or to pay  
 their homage and service to him. And if  
 this be the chief end of all such assemblies,  
 why should it not be allowed to be so of  
 those which are referred to in this chapter ?  
 Again, when they say, That the principal  
 end of divine offices is not the instruction

\* De verbo, L. 2. c. 16.

† Annot. on 1 Cor. xiv. p. 545.

and consolation of the people, but the worship of God; they seem to insinuate, that the instruction and consolation of the people is no end at all of them, or so very inconsiderable, that it need not be intended; to assert which is contrary both to scripture and reason too. Thus in this argument they oppose those ends to each other, which are not only very consistent, but ought never to be separated. No doubt but the worship of God, and our paying our homage to him, is the first and *principal* end of all the institutions of religion, and what should be chiefly aimed at in all our attendances upon them; but then the instruction and edification of the people is a *secondary* and subordinate end of them; and to which a regard is always to be had in the use of them, as the apostle expressly shews throughout the whole of this chapter; and therefore unless it could be proved that either the instruction of the people is no end of divine offices, or that the worship is compleat, tho' that end be not regarded or attained, the argument is of no force; for if it be an end, and the service defective where that end is not pursued, then its being only a subordinate, and the other the principal end, will by no means justify the use of an unknown tongue, which must render it altogether unedifying to them.

Thus

Thus I have considered the principal of those pleas which the Popish writers are wont to urge to evade the force of the apostle's arguments in this chapter, for the use of a *known* tongue in the publick worship of God; and, upon the whole, I hope it appears, that notwithstanding what they have to say, he was so far from countenancing the doctrine and practise of the church of *Rome*, that he expressly condemns it. But before I dismiss this head, there is one thing more which I must not omit to take notice of, which is, that finding themselves pressed with the strength of his reasoning, they have found out a short way of answering him, and that is, by opposing the authority of their church to his authority, yea to that of God himself. *St. Paul* has said, v. 37. that the things which he had written were *the commandments of the Lord*; but, say they, "The church does not at all offend in departing from this institution of *St. Paul*, it being left free to the church, not only to violate this institution of *St. Paul*, but also the institutions of God himself, supposing them to have been once profitable to the church, but now unprofitable." This is expressly said by one of their authors; \* and this argument of the

\* Hoffmest. in 1 *Cor.* xiv. p. 272.

church's authority is largely insisted on by Dr. Cole, at a disputation held before the lords at *Westminster*, in the beginning of *Q. Elizabeth's* reign. \* And if they were able to make good their claim to this exorbitant power and authority, I own this would be a full answer, and we should be obliged to submit to them, not only in this, but in every other instance wherein they have corrupted the worship of God. But if it appears that the church has no such power as this, I hope we may still abide by what the apostle has said, not meerly as his own opinion, but as the mind of our Lord Jesus. We are assured of *his* commission and inspiration, but we have no such evidence of the authority and infallibility of the *Pope and his Council*, as to oblige us to submit to their decisions, especially when they are directly contrary to those of our blessed Saviour and his apostles; but the weakness of the church's pretence to any such authority has been so fully shewn in a former discourse in this place, that there can be no need for me to insist upon it. †

I now proceed to consider some further arguments which they urge in defence of

\* See Collection of Records, at the end of Bishop *Burnet's History of the Reformation*, N<sup>o</sup>. 4.

† Mr. *Smyth's* Sermon.

their



their *Latin* service : And here I chuse to take notice of those which I find in a *Catechism* that has been lately published, and is cautiously distributed to such as they would draw into their communion ; and which therefore we may suppose contains such reasons for it as they chiefly rely upon, or which they think will be most likely to impress the minds of those they deal with. Therein this question is proposed, “ Why “ do the church celebrate the mass in *La-  
“ tin*, which the people, for the most part, “ does not understand?” And to this they have four things to answer.

First, Because “ it is the ancient lan-  
“ guage of the church, used in the pub-  
“ lick liturgy in all ages, in the Western  
“ parts of the world.” To which I an-  
swer,

That if it was used in the *Western*, it was otherwise in the *Eastern* parts of the world, for there the *Greek* language was used, as being commonly understood ; and even at this day where there are, in those parts, any churches remaining, who profess the Christian religion, they have their publick worship in their own language, as is owned by some of the Popish writers, and particularly concerning the *Armenians*, *Ethiopians*, *Russians*, and others. Again,

It does not appear, that even in all the Western parts of the world, their publick

offices have *in all ages* been in the *Latin* tongue; for tho' it might be so in the earlier ages of the church, yet in later times it has been otherwise; and particularly we are assured that in the 9th century the *Bobemians* had their publick service in the *Slavonian* tongue, which was the common language of their country, and that by the allowance of the *Pope* himself; and that this continued for some ages. \*

But tho' it should be allowed that the *Latin* tongue has been generally used in their publick liturgy in the *Western* parts of the world, it will not from thence follow that it should always be retained and insisted on. I own that it was for some ages used there, as the *Greek* was in the *Eastern*; but then it was when that language was in common use in those places, and generally understood by the inhabitants of them. *Origen* says, " That the *Grecians* in their  
 " prayers use the *Greek*, and the *Romans*  
 " the *Latin* tongue; and so every one ac-  
 " cording to his language, prayeth to God  
 " and praiseth him as he is able." † And *Bellarmino* himself grants, " That not on-  
 " ly in the times of the apostles, all the  
 " people were wont to answer in divine  
 " offices, (and therefore must understand

\* *Aeneas Sylvius Hist. Bobem. c. 13.*

† *Lib. contra Celsum, p. 402.*

“ the language in which they were per-  
 “ formed) but that the same was a long  
 “ time after observed both in the *Eastern*  
 “ and *Western* church, as is evident from  
 “ *Chrysostom, Jerom, &c.*” But their be-  
 ing in *Latin* then, when that language was  
 common, is no good reason why they  
 should continue to be so, when it is become  
 a *dead* language, and understood by very  
 few in any country, as it has now been for  
 many ages. Whatever prescription it may  
 plead, yet being now an unknown tongue,  
 and the generality of men, by being obliged  
 to the use of it, rendered incapable of wor-  
 shipping God with understanding; sure it is  
 highly fit it should be laid aside. But this  
 is a favour which the church of *Rome* is very  
 unwilling to grant, for tho’ (as I hinted be-  
 fore) it had been allowed to the *Bohemians*  
 by Pope *John* the VIIIth; yet two hun-  
 dred years after, *Gregory* the VIIth wrote  
 to *Uratisslaus* of *Bohemia*, that he could  
 not permit the celebration of divine offices  
 in the *Slavonian* tongue; and he comman-  
 ded that prince to oppose the people therein  
 with all his forces. \* Upon which arch-  
 bishop *Tillotson* justly remarks, “ It seems  
 “ he thought it a cause worth fighting for,  
 “ and that it were better the people should

\* *Brent's* Translation of *F. Paul's* Hist. of the Council  
 of *Trent*, p. 540.

“ be

“ be killed, than suffered to understand  
 “ their prayers.”

A 2<sup>d</sup> reason why their mass is in *Latin*,  
 tho’ the most part of the people don’t un-  
 derstand it, is, “ For a greater uniformity  
 “ in the publick worship, that so a Chri-  
 “ stian in whatsoever country he chances  
 “ to be, may still find the liturgy per-  
 “ formed in such a manner, and in the  
 “ same language to which he is accustomed  
 “ at home.” To this I reply,

That I see not of what great importance  
 it is that an exact *uniformity* in the pub-  
 lick worship of God should be observed in  
 all countries; but suppose that it may be  
 duly and acceptably performed, tho’ some-  
 what different rites and customs should be  
 used in different places. And this the church  
 of *Rome* itself allows; for in the 4<sup>th</sup> gene-  
 ral council of *Lateran* it is decreed, “ That  
 “ because in most parts within the same  
 “ city and diocese, people of divers lan-  
 “ guages are mixed, having with one faith  
 “ divers rites and customs, we strictly  
 “ charge that the bishops of such cities and  
 “ dioceses provide fit men, who accord-  
 “ ing to the diversity of their rites and  
 “ tongues, may celebrate to them divine  
 “ offices, and minister the ecclesiastical sa-  
 “ craments, instructing them both by word  
 “ and example.” \* But supposing it to be

\* Concil. Lat. c. 9.



of some importance, yet I think it is of much greater that the people should be allowed to understand what they do in the solemn acts of religion; and as a learned person says, "That it is very unreasonable that for the sake of a few that travel, the many that stay at home should be left destitute, and for one man's convenience ten thousand be exposed to eternal perdition." \* Here I cannot forbear transcribing a passage of the late archbishop *Tillotson*, who having represented the Papists as saying, "That it is *convenient* that God should be served and worshipped in the same language all the world over; replies, *Convenient* for whom? For God, or for the *people*? Not for *God* surely, for he understands all other languages as well as *Latin*, and for any thing we know to the contrary, likes them as well; and certainly it cannot be so convenient for the *people*, because they generally understand no language but their own; and it is very inconvenient they should not understand what they do in the service of God. But perhaps they mean it is convenient for the *Romish* church to have it so, because this will look like an argument that they are

\* Bishop *Williams*.

“ the *Catholick* or universal church, when  
 “ the language which was originally theirs,  
 “ shall be the universal language in which  
 “ all nations shall serve God ; and by this  
 “ means also they may bring all nations to  
 “ be of their religion, and yet make them  
 “ never the wiser. And this is a very great  
 “ convenience, because knowledge is a trou-  
 “ blefome thing, and ignorance very quiet  
 “ and peaceable, rendering men fit to be  
 “ governed, and unfit to dispute.” \*

Another reason which they offer why  
 their mass is celebrated in *Latin*, is “ to  
 “ avoid the changes which all vulgar lan-  
 “ guages are daily exposed to.” But me-  
 thinks here it may suffice to say, that sure  
 the remedy is much worse than the disease;  
 for the inconveniences that may arise from  
 any changes which vulgar languages are  
 subject to, are small and inconsiderable  
 in comparison of the damage which men  
 must sustain by being obliged to worship  
 God in a language they are wholly strangers  
 to. Besides, to urge this as a reason for their  
*Latin* service, is in effect to give up the  
 cause, for it goes on the supposition that  
 vulgar languages, by the changes which  
 they are subject to, may in time become  
*unintelligible* ; and if this be a reason

\* Tillotson's Works, folio, Vol. i. p. 277.

why they should not be used in divine worship, then surely it holds much stronger against the *Latin* tongue, which is already so, to the greatest part of men in all places.

The fourth and last reason which they urge for having their mass in *Latin*, is,  
 " That the mass being a sacrifice which the  
 " priest as minister of Christ is to offer,  
 " and the prayers of the mass being most-  
 " ly fitted for this end; it is enough that  
 " they be in a language which he (*i. e.*  
 " the priest) understands. Nor, say they,  
 " is this any ways injurious to the people,  
 " who are instructed to accompany him  
 " in every part of this sacrifice by prayers  
 " accommodated to their devotion, which  
 " they have in their ordinary prayer-books."

Answer,

Whether or no the mass be a sacrifice which the priest as minister of Christ is to offer, is not my business here to inquire. But tho' it should be so, and the prayers of the mass be mostly fitted for that end, yet I see not why upon that account it should be *sufficient* that the priest understands them; for if the people have any concern in the service he is performing, I should think they, as well as he, should understand what he is doing. And this they themselves seem to allow when they

say, that the people are instructed to accompany him in every part of the sacrifice by prayers accommodated to their devotion, which they have in their ordinary prayer-books. And if they ought to understand what he is doing, I cannot but think they are *injurious* to them, in concealing the service from them in a language they are unacquainted with, and only referring them to their ordinary prayer-books for their direction.

And now having given you an account of what the apostle has said concerning the use of an unknown tongue in the publick worship of God, and also shewn the weakness of what our adversaries are wont to alledge to evade the force of his arguments, and to support their practise of celebrating divine offices in a language which the people are generally strangers to, I think we have already sufficient ground to conclude that this their practise is not only *inexpedient* but *unlawful* too. But I proposed,

IV. More directly to prove this, and I think we can have no reason to doubt of it, if we consider,

In the first place, that it is contrary to *scripture*, which is the great rule to direct us how we are to worship God. This in  
some



some measure appears from what has been already said, and might be more fully and distinctly represented, if I had time.

Tho' *reason* tells us that God is to be worshipped, yet it is chiefly from the *scriptures* that we are to learn how we may worship him in an acceptable manner. But the directions which are therein given us for this purpose, are rendred impracticable by obliging men to worship in a language they understand not. Therein we are directed to pray and praise with *understanding* \*, and to draw near to God with a *true heart* †; and to lift up our *hearts* with our hands to God in the heavens ‡, and to pray in *faith* ||, in a humble dependance on the promises of God, thro' the merit and mediation of our Lord Jesus, for our acceptance with him. But how is it possible that these and such like directions can be observed, and the ends of worship sufficiently attained, when men are utter strangers to the language in which it is performed? It is to me an imposition upon the common sense of mankind to suppose, that our *understandings* can be employed, or our *hearts* engaged, or that *faith* can be duly exercised, when we know not the meaning

\* Ver. 15. Psalm xlvii. 7.

† Heb. x. 21.

‡ Lam. iii. 41.

|| Jam. i. 6.

of the words we make use of. If it be said, that if the people come with an intention to serve God, and do exercise a general devotion, *that* is accepted, tho' they do not particularly understand the prayers that are made; I answer: This is more than they have any warrant to say. How far it may be accepted in those who are taught to believe it, and know no better, I will not pretend to determine; but it is plain that such a general devotion does by no means come up to what the scriptures require of us, and therefore they act a very ill part in making it necessary for them to take up with it.

Besides, The use of an unknown tongue in the worship of God, is contrary to the *practise of the primitive church*, yea of all Christian churches for many ages. This has been so clearly proved by our Protestant writers in this controversy, that I need not now insist upon it.\* Yea so full and strong are the evidences of it, that many of their own authors have been forced to acknowledge it. And if the worship of God in the common and vulgar tongue was the practise of our blessed saviour and his apostles, and of Christians for many hundred years after their days, I see not what right the church

\* Bishop *Wilkins*'s discourse on the worship of God in an unknown tongue, — and a Treatise in confutation of the *Latin* service practised in the church of *Rome*.

of *Rome* had to alter it, or with what face they can deny men this privilege, when they have neither scripture nor antiquity to support them in it.

Yea I add further, that the worship of God in an unknown tongue, is contrary to *reason*, and what our own minds if duly attended to, must tell us, is not a *reasonable service*. And here I think I may appeal to every man who will allow himself to judge impartially, Who is there that has any just conceptions of God himself, but must conclude, that such a worship is neither fit for us to offer, nor for him to accept? It is not fit for us to offer, who as reasonable creatures are supposed to act reasonably, and therefore to understand what we are about, especially in so solemn an action. Nor is it fit for God to accept from us, who as he has endued us with understanding, and will and affections, so has a right to expect that these should be employed in his service; and when they are not, may he not reject it with disdain, and say as he did to his people of old in another case, *Offer it now to thy governour, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person?\**

And thus I hope it appears, that the practise of the *Romish* church, in obliging

\* Mal. i. 8.

men to worship God in an unknown tongue, is *unlawful*, as well as *inexpedient*.

And now to close all in a few words,

Let us bless God for the *Reformation*, one happy effect of which was, the restoring us to the use of our bible, and to the privilege of worshipping God in our own language; and let us be thankful for all the kind appearances of his providence in favour of these nations, whereby both our civil and religious liberties have been secured and handed down to us, notwithstanding the restless efforts of our enemies, to deprive us of them, and we have now the hope and prospect of having them long continued. And,

Let us pity the case of those who are deprived of these great and inestimable blessings, who are denied the free use of the scriptures, and are obliged to perform their publick worship in a language unknown to them, whereby it is rendred very difficult, if not impossible for them to perform it in a right manner; and while they are taught that there is no salvation out of their church, are denied the very best means of salvation in it.

And as we are enjoying these privileges, let us take care to make a due improvement of them. Let us endeavour to be well acquainted



quainted with the *scriptures*. This, among other advantages we shall gain by it, will be our best defence against the errors of *Popery*; for whatever the church of *Rome* may pretend, the greatest part of their religion has no foundation there. And in all our attendances on God in the duties of his worship, let us take care to behave with a suitable frame and temper of mind, remembering that *He is a spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and truth*, \* and can have no pleasure in those who *draw nigh to him with their lips, while their hearts are far from him*. †. This is a behaviour very unbecoming in any who profess to worship God; but it will be more inexcusable in us who are allowed the privilege of our own language, than in those who are obliged to worship in an *unknown* tongue.

\* John iv. 24.

† Mark vii. 6.

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